

**Basic Workplace Competencies  
for  
Professional-Technical Programs**

**Solving Problems and Thinking Skillfully**

**Communicating Effectively**

**Applying Technology**

**Working Responsibly**

**Planning and Managing a Career**

**Managing Resources**

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## Statement of Purpose

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This document is intended to be a resource for administrators, professional-technical instructors, and school district patrons as professional-technical programs focus efforts to meet the expectations of business and industry.

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There are many different lists and formats of the skills necessary for entry-level employment. These have several different names such as “core competencies”, “cross-functional skills”, workplace basics”, etc. The goal is to provide Idaho educators the ability to all speak the same language when discussing this arena. The result is this document for professional-technical instructors in Idaho to provide a consistent framework for instructors.

The purpose of this document is to help direct student learning in a focused manner, developing job entry-level skills needed by Idaho employers, and maximizing students’ present and future academic and career success.

The desired outcome of *Basic Workplace Competencies* is to identify skills needed for employment in ALL Career Pathways. When these skills are developed, they work to support the specific technical skills necessary for students to become workplace ready. These workplace competencies are foundational to the professional-technical education curriculum and need to be taught in the context of the program curriculum.

It is not the intention of this document to make these competencies a required set of standards for students. They are guidelines for the development of Professional-Technical Education curriculum. Regardless of Career Pathway(s) chosen or elective courses taken, students must meet State Board of Education requirements for graduation.

## Foreword

The Workplace of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century requires more from us than simply being able to read, write and compute. It also requires more than being able to perform specific technical tasks. It requires us to think, solve problems, adapt to new situations, apply knowledge in new ways and to work effectively with others.

This guide addresses those workplace skills that are fundamental to success in any occupation. Combined with effective academic skills and specific technical skills, these competencies equip people to succeed in the dynamic workplace of the future.

This guide is intended to be used in conjunction with the state curriculum guides for professional-technical education as well as to support the general academic exiting standards required of all students. The competencies listed need to be integrated with existing instruction and do not presuppose any one delivery method.

These Workplace Competencies were reviewed and edited by a team of business and educational people in Idaho. The competencies were developed from the expectations of industry as reflected in the *Secretary's Commission on Achieving Necessary Skills (SCANS)*, The *Occupational Information Network (O\*Net)*, and the *National Career Development Guidelines*.

Professional-Technical education has made important progress in the past few years to continually adapt to the increasing demands of the workplace. This guide is intended to be another tool teachers can use to continue to prepare students to meet those demands.

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## How To Use Basic Workplace Competencies

*Basic Workplace Competencies* is a resource for planning programs. It contains broad competencies that apply to all workers in every Career Pathway. The competencies can be integrated into the overall professional-technical program as follows:

- *Basic Workplace Competencies* should be used to design learning experiences in all professional-technical programs.
- The competencies can be used to illustrate that some skills apply to any and all employees no matter what Career Pathway:

*Arts & Communication*

*Business & Management*

*Health Professions*

*Human Resources*

*Industrial & Engineering*

*Natural Resources*

- Competencies can be reviewed and relevant competencies selected for instruction.
- Connections that need to be made between competencies and academic and technical skills can be identified.
- *Basic Workplace Competencies* should be taught within the existing curriculum. Lessons should be in the context of the professional-technical classroom or work experience site.

# **Basic Workplace Competencies**

The initial component of career-focused education is the *Basic Workplace Competencies*. These are competencies that all entry level workers need to meet. This consists of 51 competencies organized into six areas. The *Basic Workplace Competencies* represent what individuals need to know and be able to do to be successful in further education, in a career and in life.

## **AREA 1: Solving Problems and Thinking Skillfully**

All individuals, regardless of their career choice, must be able to think and solve problems. They need to be able to initiate action on their own, and direct and modify their own work according to the task at hand. These competencies specify the knowledge, skills and attitudes necessary for development of the capacity to assess problems and situations, anticipate what might happen next, and continuously search for creative solutions.

## **AREA 2: Communicating Effectively**

Effective communication is essential to workplaces, communities, and families. Employees with positive communication skills contribute to organizational productivity, enhance interpersonal relationships with coworkers and clients, and create opportunities for promotion and advancement.

## **AREA 3: Applying Technology**

Technology influences every work environment. To be effective in today's workplace individuals must be able to use the tools of technology to improve productivity and efficiency. Employers seek individuals who have developed technological skills and who stay abreast of the continuously changing technological environment.

## **AREA 4: Working Responsibly**

Work organizations value employees who possess the ability to work with diverse groups of people and who are able to lead others toward the achievement of common goals. Individuals must demonstrate self-direction, and a positive work ethic – exhibiting honesty, initiative, and dependability. In addition, they should understand the importance of ethical conduct and the role of ethics in professional organizations and work environments.

## **AREA 5: Planning and Managing a Career**

Since work is a significant part of life, individuals need to be actively engaged in seeking a career that matches their interests, abilities, aptitudes, and skills. Career planning enhances the possibility that one's career path will lead to success and satisfaction in work. Employers seek individuals who know what they want from work and can effectively present their qualifications

and skills through the job search process, including job applications and interviews. Throughout one's career, it is also important to seek continuous professional development opportunities.

## **AREA 6: Managing Resources**

In high-performance workplaces, all individuals must effectively manage a variety of resources: personal, financial, and environmental. Individuals' ability to maintain good health, contribute to a safe work environment, handle multiple tasks, and manage time not only enhances personal well-being, but fosters the success of the organization or business as well.

# **Academic Crosswalks in Basic Workplace Competencies**

Academic Crosswalks pose the question, “What knowledge and skills from the *Basic Workplace Competencies* help students to meet *Idaho’s Standards for Excellence*, Idaho’s exiting standards?”

**Math Standards**

**Social Studies Standards**

**Science Standards**

**Language Arts/Communications Standards**

**Health Standards**

*Basic Workplace Competencies* focus on many areas that are being addressed by *Idaho’s Standards for Excellence*. This provides opportunities for interdisciplinary curriculum development. Many connections can be made during the instructional process through authentic projects or workplace situations that involve related content that can help students meet *Idaho’s Standards for Excellence*, the Idaho exiting standards.